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ABSTRACT

Three case studies of educational practices in India illustrate that lifelong learning (1) is not confined to childhood; (2) encompasses a large number of sources outside formal education; and (3) can lead to improvement of everday life. These three educational activities, all at semi-rural institutions, and directed toward improving aborigines' daily life, also show that the principles of lifelong learning are not restricted to rich countries; that the demand for education is realistic; that formal, informal, and non-formal education may each fulfill different functions cooperatively. The first project involved sharing of new ideas with local farmers by Losbad Hill Agricultural Institute--new methods of irrigation, soil testing, and provision of training (long- and short-term) to alleviate protein deficiences and improve the community. The second, a one-woman effort to set up a kindergarten, viewed education as a child's right. It soon blossomed into a "Meadow School" that sent teachers out to where the children were tending cattle, evening classes, some basic vocational education, and a teacher training program. The third (an "Ashram" or local center) used, inter alia, Gandhi's teachings to run a "People's Court" that mediated local disputes, drastically reduced the crime and alcohol abuse rate, and set up people's cooperatives. In all these projects, curriculum is adapted to conditions in the region, especially work situations; projects are planned and carried out by the people themselves (with technical help); real changes result in people's lives and their community. (CP)

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LIFELONG EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY LEARNING: THREE CASE STUDIES IN INDIA

V. PATEL and N.N. SHUKLA
W. VAN VLIET (editor)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

This publication presents condensed descriptions of three selected ongoing educational practices in India, which have relevance for research within the context of lifelong education. These practices exemplify alternative ways in which education can help to improve living conditions, and are based on programmes which are now well established. They are mainly supported by private initiative and aim at assisting one of the most underprivileged population groups in the country, the Advivasis. The purpose of the studies was to identify the operational features, the pre-conditions, the outcomes and the implications of educational services attempting to improve certain aspects of daily life, without losing sight of the constraints and characteristics of the population concerned.

The studies show, in general terms, that the principles of lifelong education are not restricted to rich countries. They indicate particularly that the demand for flexible forms of education differing from the purely conventional ones is realistic and that educational services corresponding to this demand are both feasible and efficient. Finally, they illustrate how formal, non-formal and informal educational programmes at village level may each fulfill different functions and still articulate smoothly with each other.

In publishing these reports the Unesco Institute for Education must first acknowledge its debt to the local research teams and their leaders, Professor Vajubhai Patel and Dr. N.N. Shukla, who, in the face of great difficulties, succeeded in carrying out the studies on which these reports are based. The shortened version of their reports here presented cannot unfortunately convey to the reader the full extent of the work and effort demanded by their research. Appreciation must also be expressed of the work of Mr. W. van Vliet who harmonized the separate presentations and prepared the concluding chapter, and of Professor Dennis L. Buckley who prepared the introduction and revised the manuscript for publication.

M. Dino Carelli
Director

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INTRODUCTION

The principles of lifelong education have been described in greater detail elsewhere. They involve amongst others three premises with logical implications for educational practice which are of central importance for the present report. The first is that systematic learning is not confined to childhood; as a consequence systematic learning facilities and opportunities should be provided for the adult to continue to learn. The second premise is that there is a large number of sources of learning outside the formal educational system; therefore close coordination should be established and developed between them and the educational system. Thirdly, learning could be a powerful means for the improvement of everyday life; thus relevant educational practice should be guided by the quality of life desired by the individual and his community. The three case studies presented here were deliberately chosen to illustrate these three principles of lifelong education, and to show how they were realized in educational practices in isolated rural areas in India.

1. Research Context

These case studies are part of a research programme which the Unesco Institute for Education (UIE) launched in 1972. It comprises a series of theoretical, developmental and analytic-descriptive studies of school level education within the perspective of lifelong education. The research programme resulted in several series of publications published by the UIE since 1973. In a first monograph R.H. Dave attempted to extract from the literature already available on lifelong education a list of concept characteristics which have implications for school curriculum (1). Following monographs dealt respectively with bibliography on lifelong education and school curriculum, connections between the principles of lifelong education and curriculum development, and lifelong education and curricula in developing countries (2). A landmark was achieved in the theoretical phase of the Institute's research programme with the

publication of *Foundations of Lifelong Education* in 1976 (3). The study is the outcome of the cooperative efforts of scholars from the disciplines of philosophy, history, sociology, psychology, anthropology and economics. Three other studies exploring the implications of lifelong education for evaluation, teacher education and Basic School education were carried out at the same time (4).

Parallel to the theoretical studies, three developmental projects were conducted in different national settings to test the theory of lifelong education against practice. In the area of curriculum evaluation, national institutions of Japan, Romania and Sweden cooperated to develop criteria, procedures and instruments for evaluation of existing curricula in the perspective of lifelong education. This cross-national study was published in 1977 (5). Guidelines for the introduction of alternative forms of Basic Education within the framework of lifelong education were developed on the basis of ongoing experiments in several Sahelian countries of West Africa. This report is available in French and English (6). The third project centred upon initial teacher preparation. Innovations in the theoretical, methodological and institutional aspects of teacher training were conceived, introduced and evaluated by institutions associated with the project in Australia, the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, India and Singapore. The analysis and synthesis of these national reports is to be published in 1978 (7).

The third category of projects undertaken by UIE is that of case studies. These studies have been concerned with overall educational reforms, and with educational practices relevant to lifelong education. In the first group Spain and Tanzania provide examples of global national reforms close to what may be called total systems of lifelong education (8). The Spanish report has already been published, while the Tanzanian study is due for publication in 1978. The case studies of specific educational practices relevant to lifelong education already concluded have involved institutions from several countries such as the Dominican Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany and India. Radio Santa Maria, based on La Vega, presented an alternative pattern of eight grades of compulsory education which offers examination-based certificates to adults at reduced time and cost with great flexibility in operation (9). In the Federal Republic of Germany the Hibernia School provides an example of integration and articulation between school and family in the Waldorf school tradition. The study

is a joint effort of the teachers in the school to describe the structure and content of the school programme, which emphasises integration of artistic, practical and academic education. The report is in the phase of final editing for publication in 1978.

2. Methodology

Although there are well-known controversies surrounding the methodology of case studies, there is general consensus concerning their ability to contribute to knowledge. The essential feature of the case study is the description and in-depth analysis of the chosen object of investigation. This does not mean that the case study is guided exclusively by the peculiarity of the object under study. The focus to the research could be provided by a theoretical framework which determines in advance the aim of the investigation, the questions to be asked, and the aspects of the object which should receive particular attention.

In the context of international, cooperative research sponsored by the UIE, the case studies are not undertaken mainly for the particular case's sake. They should fulfil five objectives:

1. To contribute to a better understanding of the principles of lifelong education;

2. to identify the practical implications and operational modalities of the idea of lifelong education;

3. to generate hypotheses for further, quantitative research in lifelong education;

4. to provide to leaders of innovative practices the opportunity to analyse and appraise their experiences from an international viewpoint;

5. to disseminate information on such innovative practices internationally, so that other educationists confronted by similar problems may benefit.

3. Three Case Studies on Education and Community Development

The preceding partial description of work completed by the UIE provides the research context of the case studies reported and analysed in this publication. They focus upon specific educational practices in the two states of Gujarat and Maharashtra in the west of India. Of the three cases studied, one is located in the rural, underdeveloped area of Rangpur and the other two at Kosbad Hill, a semi-rural area some 70 miles (100 kilometres) from Bombay. While the Anand Niketan Ashram, the institution located in Rangpur, is a totally autonomous and informal program, the Agriculture Institute and the Rural Child Education Centre, the two institutions at Kosbad Hill, are formal education services linked to the State government. All three, however, have a relatively long history of existence - a characteristic which made them especially attractive for assessing the feasibility of some principles of lifelong education. The educational activities in the three cases are directed toward improving the life conditions of the aborigines or "Adivasis" through community development. The Adivasis ("early residents") are aboriginal tribes living in rural and jungle areas of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

4. Procedures of the Studies

Professor V. Patel, Director of the Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan College of Education, and Dr. N.N. Shukla, Principal of the Hansraj Jivandas College of Education (both affiliated with the University of Bombay), accepted the invitation to conduct these case studies on behalf of the UIE. During a preparatory meeting in 1973 in Hamburg the studies were planned and preliminary designs made. After the coordinators return to India definite research designs were developed and completed during the first part of 1974. The common focus of the three studies was community improvement. The duration of the investigation was from May, 1974 to December, 1975. Professor Patel directed the team of investigators which systematically observed the Ashram of Anand Niketan, while Dr. Shukla assumed responsibility for the research unit investigating the two institutes of Kosbad Hill.

Prior to the investigations proper, operating hypotheses were developed, interview schedules drawn up, a check list of lifelong education attributes compiled and literature already available on the institutions examined. After preparation of

the tools for investigation, the teams proceeded to on-site observation of the three institutions. The results of the research were compiled in three separate reports which included evaluation of selected educational practices of the institutions.

A number of problems were encountered which were only overcome with a great amount of hard work and dedication to the task at hand. Some questionnaires and interview schedules had to be translated into the Gujarati language, villagers refused to be interviewed, geographical conditions restricted the sample selected for interviewing, and so forth. Contact with the Unesco Institute for Education in Hamburg over the three years of the project was only by letter. Local conditions and events also provided distracting circumstances in the course of the project. In 1975 the Anand Niketan was involved in their Silver Jubilee, which necessitated catering for an unusual number of visitors. The famine that year also required extraordinary measures from the Ashram to provide food and fodder for 1,700 people and 20,000 cattle for nearly three months.

The Technical Director of the UIE was able to visit Bombay in 1975 and to provide personal encouragement to the project in progress. The three reports were discussed and clarified in mid-June 1976 at the UIE in Hamburg in a concluding meeting with Professor Patel, Dr. Shukla and the Institute staff. Mr. W. van Vliet, associated with the UIE, undertook the editing of the three reports for inclusion in one publication, and prepared a concluding chapter which emphasizes the connection of all these experiences with lifelong education.

5. Structure of the Report

Chapters one and two deal with the institutes at Kosbad Hill and chapter three with the Anand Niketan Ashram. A detailed description and setting for the studies is presented at the beginning of each chapter. The body of each chapter presents an analysis and the findings of the individual investigation. Chapter four summarizes the findings of the three case studies and draws the major conclusion of the studies. Hopefully light has been shed upon different ways of realizing some of the theoretical principles of lifelong education in actual life, in actual settings, and in ways which have stood the test of time.

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CHAPTER 1

EDUCATION FOR RURAL SURVIVAL:
CASE STUDY OF THE AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE AT KOSBAD HILL

Kosbad Hill is located near the West Coast of the Indian subcontinent, in the State of Maharashtra, some 70 miles North of Bombay (100 kilometres). The area has an annual rainfall of 80 to 100 inches (200-250 centimetres) during the Monsoon period of June to September and is suitable for agriculture, but there are no other sources of employment.

Plans for the establishment of an agricultural institute somewhere in the region were discussed by the Government of Bombay as early as 1947, the year in which India became independent. The Government called on a voluntary agency, the Gokhale Education Society, to work out the details and to manage the project. This Society had for many years run a secondary school in Bordi which also offered an agricultural course, and had thus acquired some experience in the field of agricultural education. The Agricultural Institute was established in 1949 at Kosbad Hill - and not in Bordi - because Kosbad Hill lies in an agricultural area where land was easily available. The Institute has a farm of 150 acres (60 hectares) of which 50 acres (20 ha) have irrigation possibilities).

The Agricultural Institute was originally conceived as a Centre for Training and Research along traditional lines. However, two events which took place during the early stages of its operation seem to have had a profound influence on the nature of its work, making the Institute less academic and more oriented towards the needs of the local population. The first was the "Grow More Food" campaign launched in 1950 by the then Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In response to the campaign the staff and the students of the Institute distributed 50 truckloads of sweet potato creepers free of charge among the farmers in the neighbourhood. The second was the new

Land Act passed by the State of Maharashtra in 1951, whereby the Adivasis became owners of the land they tilled. However, they needed some instruction in the methods and techniques of agriculture, and the Government of Bombay naturally turned to their new Institute with the request to undertake the training of Adivasi farmers. During the same year the Government of Bombay financed a mission to Japan, led by the Director of the Gokhale Education Society, to study modern farming techniques and village industries.

The programme of the Agricultural Institute covers a wide range of activities including, *inter alia*, the training of technicians and extension workers, the organization of youth clubs, operating a primary and a secondary school, providing information on nutrition and hygiene, preparing people for local self-government and doing agricultural research. These will be described below in more detail. However, it should be noted from the outset that all these activities are designed for one purpose, namely to improve the standard of living of the local population in the district. To achieve this, a number of alternatives were considered but, in the view of the Agricultural Institute, the most obvious way was to help the Adivasis become better farmers. Accordingly, all activities undertaken by the Institute have some agricultural bias or component.

There are two main aspects of improving agricultural production. One is of a technical nature and may include, for example, soil testing, the introduction of new varieties or new crops, the use of fertilizer and irrigation. The other is often more difficult, namely to persuade the farmers to try something new rather than continue to cultivate the land in the same way as their ancestors had done for generations. In the present study, most of the emphasis will be on the second aspect. It should not be imagined, however, that the Institute was committed from the start to a number of research findings and ideas, and subsequently proceeded to sell these to the local population. Whenever the staff and the students found something new, they attempted to share their ideas with the farmers. They learnt as they went along - like everybody else. The programme as described below is the result of 25 years of learning and experience by the staff, the students and the farmers.

1. Studies and Research

The Agricultural Institute first studied the local methods used in producing the traditional rice crop, and soon came to the conclusion that the Japanese method of rice cultivation would yield better results. However, the main problem was the storage of adequate water supplies. Since canal irrigation was not possible, owing to the hilly nature of the land in this area, the Institute first devised a method of short-term conservation of water by digging pits for water storage. They were found to be useful, since the water table in this region stands at a depth of 20 to 30 feet (6 to 9 metres). Over the years the Agricultural Institute has dug 83 storage wells and sunk 20 drinking water wells. One well of 25 feet (about 7 m) diameter and 25 feet depth provides a supplementary water supply sufficient to irrigate 15 acres (6 ha) of rice during the autumn when rainfall is below normal, and about 3 acres (1,2 ha) in the dry spring season. Thus at least one crop of rice is assured. But, in addition, irrigation opened up a number of new possibilities.

Vast areas in the district are covered by grassland, but both the yield and the quality are poor, and legumes which provide protein food are almost entirely absent. The Research Department of the Institute has tried a number of forage crops and found the following to be high-yielding and nutritious: *desmanthus virgatus, leucaena glanca, townsville stylo, sesbana grandiflora* and *elitoria temarea*. The two crops specially studied at the Institute are *sapota* and *papaya* with the result that the ravan grafted *sapota* seedlings are now produced by the thousand in a year. In addition, the Institute has evolved a fertilization schedule for the crop in relation to its fruiting habits. After extensive studies, a very cheap and simple method of raising *papaya* seedlings in bamboo baskets was developed. This allowed the cultivation of vigorous plants which are early to bear, give a prolific crop, and are harvested in early summer, when market prices are high. Other fruits and vegetables which were found to fare well in the soil and climate of Kosbad Hill are chikoo, mango and asparagus.

Irrigation also permitted the growing of new food crops such as wheat, sorghum, or hybrid maize as a second crop after the rice harvest. At the Institute's demonstration farm a three-crop cycle has been put into effect, namely, rice, wheat and green gram. In fact, multiple crops have been introduced wherever irrigation was possible.

As the soil of Kosbad Hill is not evenly fertile, it is absolutely essential to test the soil before suggesting different varieties of food crops. Therefore a laboratory was set up to analyse soil samples taken from various fields of cultivation. After the soil has been tested the farmers are recommended suitable crops, manures and fertilizers.

2. Agricultural Training

The Institute provides four types of agricultural training courses: a two-year course leading to a University diploma in agriculture, more practical courses for young people in the age-group 18-25, training courses for village-level workers and short courses for farmers.

The two-year course was established in 1949 for the sons of farmers in the district. The programme includes various branches of agriculture and animal husbandry as well as related subjects such as public health. Practical experience is gained at the Institute's farm where food crops and horticultural crops such as mango, sapota, coconut, banana, papaya and vegetables are raised. The farm also has a department for dairy processing and poultry raising. Upon completion of the course, graduates may be employed as agricultural assistants or village-level workers. Present enrolment is 55 in the first year and 57 in the second year of study.

Practical training for people in the age-group 18-25 was started by the Institute in 1959, with a view to introducing new tools and new methods of cultivation among the tribal population in the area. Students learn about horticulture, soil science, plant protection, irrigation, and forestry mainly through practical demonstration in the fields where they help the tribal farmers and learn to tackle real-life situations. The Institute provides a long course of one year's duration and a short course lasting four months, each for 50 students. Upon completion of the course, participants are provided with grafts of fruit trees and improved seeds of grains and vegetables in order to help them to practise at home what they have learnt at the Institute.

The training of village-level workers was started in 1964. Two courses are provided, a short one of six months' duration conducted twice a year, and a longer course lasting one year. Subjects include agriculture and animal husbandry but also

public health, applied nutrition, cooperatives, social work and book-keeping. The main reason behind the organization of these courses is that it was found necessary to train people who would familiarize the farmers with the new developments in agricultural techniques and disseminate the research findings of the Institute. The number of trainees is 150 per course.

The Institute also provides training courses for farmers. The purpose of these courses, which last five days, is to give the farmers some information on topics such as high-yielding varieties of crops, methods of grain storage, types of insecticides, and nutrition. Twenty such courses are organized every year, ten for male and ten for female farmers.

3. Other Educational Activities

Other educational activities undertaken or sponsored by the Agricultural Institute include the establishment of youth clubs, the organization of courses on nutrition, the promotion of local self-government and provision for primary and secondary education. These are all to a greater or lesser degree linked with agricultural development.

Thus the youth clubs, which were opened in ten villages for boys and girls in the age-group 10-15, are encouraged to take up small projects in kitchen-gardening, calf and sheep rearing and poultry keeping. Members of the clubs are also expected to assist neighbours in their village in tasks such as plant protection and rodent control. In addition they are supposed to organize and participate in recreational and cultural programmes.

Lack of protein is one of the serious drawbacks of the Indian diet. As a result of this the health of the people, and consequently their productivity, suffer. Therefore a good training in nutrition and dietetics is essential. With the help of UNICEF the Institute organized applied nutrition programmes. These programmes comprise three phases: education, training and distribution. The members of the youth clubs and members of the extension services are given practical demonstrations in the production of green vegetables, fruits, and poultry. Some demonstrations are also conducted in producing nutritive food which prevents certain diseases. Research is conducted on banana and other plants which require little water, such as custard apple, drumsticks, etc.

Special courses in nutrition are conducted for different classes of people. They are as follows:

a) a 2-day course for village council presidents;

b) a 7-day course for members of the village councils, extension officers and members of the youth clubs;

c) a 2-week course for primary teachers.

All three courses, in which vegetable seed production, value of supplementary food, etc. are taught, are conducted on average three times a year. In addition a feeding programme for 150 children is conducted once a week.

As a result of legislation villages in the State of Maharashtra were given a large degree of responsibility for local administration and development. However, since the villagers had no experience at all in these matters, the Government asked the Agricultural Institute to organize short training courses for members or future members of the village councils, in subjects such as village law, social affairs, community development and animal husbandry. The duration of the courses varies from three to ten days and they are conducted several times a year.

To encourage the development of leadership among the Adivasis, a residential school was started on 27 April 1958. The number of students who are provided primary education and training in agriculture and village industries is 120 (90 boy and 30 girls).

On 1 June 1965, a secondary school was set up. As the villages were spread out and transport facilities inadequate, hostel facilities were provided. The secondary school has three grades (8-10) with an enrolment of 130 students (100 boys and 30 girls).

The syllabus followed is that approved by the Government of Maharashtra. In addition, the following work-experience projects have been included in the curriculum:

- growing of food crops such as cereals, vegetables and fruit;
- poultry keeping;
- calf and sheep rearing;

- bee-keeping.

The boys and girls learn all these crafts through projects. Learning by doing is the theme, as the children work daily on the farm for two hours in the morning from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. A follow-up programme is planned where they experiment with new seeds, plants, and poultry, to practise what they have learnt here. A mini-kit programme is provided for this purpose. Follow-up visits to the children's home in the neighbouring areas are conducted by the staff of the Institute. Thus an attempt is made to link education with all-round development. Every year five or six promising boys are given loan scholarships. Studies undertaken by these students are mainly B.A., B.Sc., B,Com., Dip.Ed., and B.Ed. The amount per sholarship is between Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 4,000, depending on the requirements of the beneficiaries.

Apart from these activities the Institute runs a primary and a pre-primary school as well. The number enrolled at the primary school, which covers grades 1-4, is 90 boys and 10 girls, i.e., 100 in all. Though the syllabus followed is that approved by the Government of Maharashtra, the students here also work two hours on the farm. In the kindergarten and crêche there are 27 boys and 15 girls in an age-group ranging between six months and six years. Here an attempt is made at integration into society, with songs, stories and games. There is a daily free meals programme whereby children are given *sukdi* (a kind of sweet made out of wheat), sapota, bread, etc.

4. Innovative Practices followed by the Institute

Nearly all the educational programmes and training courses organized by the Institute are designed to persuade the local population to adopt new methods and practices. Most of these, such as digging wells for irrigation, the growing of fruits and vegetables, the introduction of new crops and the use of fertilizer, are directly concerned with agricultural development, while others, such as the provision of courses in nutrition and the training of community leaders, aim at improving the general welfare of the local population. Now it is always easier to suggest innovations to others than to change one's own habits. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to ask whether the Institute itself has adopted new educational practices. Data on this point were collected with the help of check lists, interviews and direct observations. Some of the

results are briefly summarized below. They concern the use of educational guidance techniques, regular contacts with the parents of school children, the use of improvised apparatus and health education.

Though educational and vocational guidance are well-known, they are not practised in many schools in India due to lack of facilities. In the secondary school of the Agricultural Institute, the abilities of the boys and girls are tested and they are given guidance regarding the selection of a vocation. Deserving candidates are given financial assistance for further study, and all efforts are made to absorb as many candidates as possible in the Institute itself in various capacities from the lowest to the highest.

Once the abilities of the children are known, they are motivated and opportunities are provided for further learning. This has given them scope to improve the quality of their life. Most of the parents appreciate this guidance and come for further advice. However, once when a boy was found to have an I.Q. of 140, and the school authorities offered to send him for higher education, the parents were unwilling to part with the boy and took him home. Parents are regularly invited to watch the types of education imparted in the school and the change that is taking place in their children. The realization of the fact that the children have developed practical skills useful for their vocation has created a positive attitude toward school education in the parents.

In this tribal region, it is impossible to procure sophisticated material for preparing apparatus. As "necessity is the mother of invention", it was thought appropriate to make use of available local materials and thus to encourage the inhabitants to make use of indigenous resources. Agriculture is one of the most important parts of the syllabus, but the people in this region have no access to complicated and costly agricultural equipment. Therefore, cheap and simple methods have been used by the Agricultural Institute for preparing improvised apparatus. Germinating seeds on blotting paper which has been soaked in water is an improvised technique to find out whether the seeds supplied would germinate. Raising seedlings in bamboo baskets is also simple and cheap: it costs next to nothing, because bamboo baskets are made in the area. A gobar gas plant is used by the Institute to demonstrate how methane and manure can be prepared by using animal and human excreta. This process has a three-fold advantage:

1) methane gas which is utilized as fuel is produced;
2) the residue in the plant is a rich manure for the fields;
3) the surrounding area is kept clean because excreta is collected in one place and is transformed into useful matter.

To improve the health of the community, several projects have been undertaken by the Institute. The Adivasi people are given health talks from time to time. Stress is laid on cleanliness and the value of nutritive food as preventive measures, and free medicines are distributed to the sick. During epidemics, vaccination and inoculation campaigns are organized as preventive measures against the spread of the disease. Applied nutrition programmes are conducted where nutrition education is imparted and preparation of recipes which prevent the loss of nutritive value of food is demonstrated. Feeding programmes are arranged where pregnant and nursing mothers and their infants are provided with high protein foods.

Not only was the use of most vegetables unknown to the Adivasis, but the use of oil and milk was also new to them. It was only when food packets containing food-stuffs prepared in oil were distributed by an industrialist through the Institute during the drought period that they learnt to use oil. Though they have cattle and now know the food-value of milk, a majority of them still refrain from using milk in their diet. Though the Institute is making all possible efforts, it will take a long time before those people change their food habits and lead a healthy life.

An important objective of the health project is to help people to help themselves to be healthy. Thus an effort is made to improve the quality of life of the people through this project. However, even more important is the attitude of the staff, collectively and individually, towards the local population. The staff of the Institute are of the opinion that although in the beginning the local population showed a tendency to be hostile, later on with the help of demonstrations and free distribution of seeds and fertilizers, they were able to gain the confidence of the people. There were some who out of sheer curiosity came forward to watch the activities of the Institute. Though there was initial resistance to change, activities like demonstrations and social gatherings helped to develop desirable attitudes towards learning something new. The most positive attitude towards learning is seen in the Adivasis'

desire to share experiences with the other tribal cultivators. The staff of the Institute think that this has resulted in the improvement of their quality of life, and this is their ultimate purpose. In fact, they joined the Institute with a missionary zeal to work for the uplift of the people; they see their role as animators, co-learners, guides, and friends rather than agricultural technicians and teachers.

5. Impact on the Local Population

An interview schedule was developed to determine the impact of the Agricultural Institute on the community. Two groups were interviewed, viz. Adivasis belonging to adopted villages (first group), and Adivasis who were not connected with the Institute in any way (second group). The interview was conducted with these two groups in order to assess the efforts of the Institute. Twenty-four farmers belonging to the adopted villages and six farmers not connected to the Institute were interviewed. In the second group only six were interviewed because it was very difficult to contact more farmers of this group.

The analysis of the data collected indicates the following:

a) Average land owned by each farmer of both the groups is about 2 acres (0.8 ha). The first group, on an average, cultivates three crops in a year, viz. rice, wheat, jowar, tur (a kind of pulse), vari (a special kind of rice), and different types of vegetables. The second group cultivates only one rice crop for want of irrigation facilities.

b) Out of 24 farmers, 8 have their own wells, and the remaining 16 use the community wells. Out of these 8 farmers who have their own individual wells, 6 have their own pumps. Wells are built and pumps are fixed with the help of the Agricultural Institute. The main contribution of the people towards the construction of these wells was labour. However, some have contributed some funds, according to their capacity. Apart from those who have pumps, other farmers also know how to operate the pumps and some of them even know how to repair them, as they are trained by the Institute. These farmers from the adopted villages appreciate the value of irrigation facilities for multiple cropping and the value of clean drinking water. Twenty-five

years ago these farmers were not using well-water for drinking purposes. They were utilizing the water from rivers, ponds, and puddles. For drinking purposes they must fetch water from a village well. As regards the pump, they have seen it, but do not know how to use it.

c) The first group had received training from the Institute regarding selection of seeds, grafting, use of manure and fertilizers, high-yielding varieties of paddy and wheat, operation and repair of a pump, the applied nutrition programme, making bricks, digging wells, and constructing houses. Interviews showed that these very farmer families who previously were barely cultivating one crop of rice during the year, are now cultivating three, and are growing vegetables and fruit-bearing trees, which were unknown to them before they came into contact with the Institute. However, though the second group has heard of these developments, they do not seem to possess the skill to implement these programmes.

d) The help received by the farmers of the first group, according to them, has resulted in the following:

1. Improvement in economic conditions.
2. Improvement in the methods of agriculture.
3. Regeneration of cottage industries.
4. Development of community spirit (through cultural programmes).
5. Spread of education.
6. Improvement in health and sanitation.
7. Arrangement of residential quarters.
8. Establishment of cooperative societies.
9. Facility for recreation.
10. Removal of social mal-practices.
11. Facilities to have a savings account.
12. Availability of medical care.
13. Nutrition programme.

Obviously, the second group could not respond to this question, as they had not come under the influence of the Institute.

e) Both groups are of the opinion that the education of their children is important for their future life. The farmers of the first group feel strongly that their children should remain in the villages, as living con-

ditions have improved. The farmers of the second group have no definite idea about their children remaining in the villages. The farmers of the first group are willing to send their children for higher studies in agriculture. Their women-folk have also learnt a number of things such as poultry-keeping, bee-keeping, bamboo and cane work, kitchen-gardening, sewing, and the preparation of various vegetable recipes. These farmers could further say that they exchange ideas during the *melas* (fairs), festivals and social gatherings. The second group, when interviewed, could not indicate any such progress.

The comparative data support the assumption that the community improvement and higher standard of living observed in the first group are mainly due to the efforts of the Agricultural Institute.

CHAPTER 2

EDUCATION AS CHILDREN'S RIGHT:
CASE STUDY OF GRAM BAL SHIKSHA KENDRA

It may be argued that one reason why the Adivasis were so poor was their lack of relevant knowledge and skills, and that, conversely, an appropriate type of education would help to improve their standard of living. In general terms, education may be seen, not as an end in itself, but as a means for economic development. The educational programme of the Agricultural Institute at Kosbad Hill which was described in the preceding chapter may be viewed as an illustration of this line of thought: the training of farmers, the demonstration of new methods of cultivation, the extension work, as well as primary and secondary education were to serve a clearly defined economic purpose, namely, to make the Adivasis better farmers.

It may also be argued that all people, or at least all children, have a right to education, regardless of economic benefits. This was the view of a devoted educator, Mrs. Tarabai, whose work will be briefly described in the present chapter. Her main concern was with the education of the Adivasi children. This is not to say that she was unaware of the poverty of these children, but that she saw their poverty merely as an impediment to education. She tried to find ways of educating Adivasi children despite the fact that their families were so desperately poor that they could not afford to educate them.

Mrs. Tarabai's first attempt, which goes back as far as 1945, was a failure. In that year she opened a small kindergarten in a rural area. This in itself was a novelty; kindergartens existed only in the larger cities, and not in rural areas. To mark the occasion, the kindergarten was opened by the Chief Minister of what at that time was the State of Bombay. Apart from being located in a rural area, the school represented another innovation, in that it was open to all children in the

neighbourhood, regardless of class or caste. A simple meal served at the school would make it possible for the poorer children to attend, and indeed, make attending school attractive to these children. However, after a brief period of encouragement and success, many parents withdrew their children because they did not want them to mix with "untouchables", and certainly not to take meals with them. This setback came as a shock to Mrs. Tarabai. She realized that the problem of "untouchability" was a fact of life, and that there was no point in trying to continue the school for children from different creeds and castes. At the same time, she was concerned most with the tribal children, and she decided that if these children could not go to school, then she would take the school to the children. For a number of years she taught the small children in the tribal communities as best she could. She thus came to understand the conditions of poverty and ignorance under which these children were growing up.

In particular, she found that most of the tribal children could not attend school, even if it were free of charge, because they were needed at home. The very small children (those who would normally attend kindergarten and the lower grades of primary schools) had to look after their baby brothers and sisters while their parents were away working in the fields, and the older children had duties such as grazing cattle. If the smaller children were to come to school, someone else would have to look after the babies. But why not bring the babies to school as well? They would probably receive better care at a crèche than at home. Mrs. Tarabai submitted her ideas to the Government of India, and, with Government help in the form of loans and grants, as well as donations from friends, she was able to establish an education centre at Kosbad Hill, comprising a crèche, kindergarten, and primary school. This was in 1956, ten years after her first attempt.

At present, the centre comprises several kindergartens, a primary school, and a teacher training college. In addition, it runs evening classes for primary school children, a training course for child welfare workers, and some vocational courses.

There are now seven kindergartens, six of which have a crèche attached to them. The enrolment of the kindergartens is close to 300, nearly all of them Adivasi children in the age-group 2 1/2 to 6 years. They receive a free meal, clothing, and occasionally a piece of soap or some oil, as well as instruction. But education has lost most of the "pre-school"

characteristics that were held in such high esteem when Mrs. Tarabai opened her first kindergarten ten years before. The children learn prayer songs, three per year, because they like singing and have a natural sense of rhythm, they pick flowers and make garlands, they do clay modelling and drawing. They also learn some language skills and arithmetic by sorting out a miscellaneous collection of objects such as feathers, stones, shells, seeds, etc. While the infants are at the kindergarten, their younger brothers and sisters are looked after in the crêche. These babies - some of them not more than a few weeks old - are fed and given a bath, they can play and rest, and they learn to speak.

The education of the older children could not be assured in the same way because, as we noted above, they had to help their parents. In particular, during the rainy season the tribal children are required to drive the cattle to the forests for grazing, and they are engaged in this work for about four months. It is therefore not possible for them to attend school regularly, especially during this time. Hence, Mrs. Tarabai sent her teachers to the meadows where the boys and girls can be found grazing their cattle. The children took it in turns to graze the cattle while the others flocked around the teacher, in the beginning out of sheer curiosity and later with an urge to learn.

This Meadow School has no walls, no roofs, no bells and no time-tables. Arithmetic, language, science, and other subjects are taught here through story-telling and dramatization. A number of objects found on the spot are used as teaching aids.

Thus, the notion of time is taught with the help of a tree, the shadow of which is measured at different times of the day. This leads to the reading of the dial of the clock. By using the newly-born kid of a goat and pebbles, the children are taught to count days, weeks, months and years. The decimal system of notation is taught by using one straw in place of ten pebbles when the kid is ten days old. A straw and a pebble are used when the kid is eleven days old, which gives them the idea of ten and one.

Scientific knowledge is imparted to them in an informal way by discussing the natural phenomena, nature scenes, and by discussing birds and bees. Hygiene is taught by arranging special activity programmes, such as cutting the nails, cutting the hair, etc. Desirable social habits are included by

arranging common get-together programmes, organized and managed by the children themselves.

Though the Meadow School is conducted for only four months, it is continued for another two months, under the shade of a tree, for about two hours daily where lessons in reading and writing are arranged, if desired by the children. The natural and practical training given to them are an incentive for them to attend the day-schools.

The impact of the Meadow School is that more children have started attending the day-school and the number attending the Meadow School is gradually diminishing. The older generation have realized the value of education and prefer to graze the cattle themselves, sending the children to the day-school. In 1975 the strength of the Meadow School was 45, i.e., 25 boys and 20 girls. One senior staff member continues to conduct the Meadow School with the help of the trainees.

Meanwhile, the primary school had expanded and now has an enrolment of 250 (175 boys and 75 girls) and a staff of 7 teachers. This is an ordinary seven-grade school except that the curriculum - and in particular the teaching methods - had to be adapted to the special way of life of the Adivasi children. These children find it extremely difficult to sit in one place for any length of time or to concentrate their attention. In this connection, the experience gained by teachers in the Meadow Schools turned out to be very useful.

As the Adivasi children form a considerable section of the school-going population, training of Adivasi teachers became essential. The Junior College of Education was therefore started in 1957 to solve the educational problems that come in the way of conducting schools on proper lines. The aim of this College is to educate primary and pre-school teachers. After training they are given a diploma for teaching at one or the other level.

In addition to the Government syllabi, many other programmes are included during the training period of these teachers to enable them to handle primary schools in the rural areas - particularly those where the majority of children come from Adivasi areas. Importance is given to the social and cultural activities suitable to the Adivasi culture. Field visits are a part of the regular programme of this training course. Special efforts are made to inculcate desirable attitudes in the

teachers towards the education of the backward and unskilled tribal people.

All efforts and attention are concentrated on furthering the cause of education of tribal children and adults. Since these people are the most neglected in these areas, the problem of education of the tribal children is a major one. Constant efforts are being made by the staff, not only to discover better teaching methods, but also to inculcate the spirit of lifelong learning. Many experiments are conducted to create life-like learning situations and to prepare improvised teaching aids from available local material. The duration of the course is two years. The total number of trainees in the college is 160, i.e., 84 boys and 76 girls. The number of staff members of the college is 18.

In 1964 the Kosbad Hill Education Centre started the training of child welfare workers. This course is sponsored by the Indian Council for Child Welfare in New Delhi. Most of the time is devoted to practical work related to health, education and entertainment of children up to the age of twelve. Upon completion of the course, the trainees may be employed in health and nutrition centres or work as teachers in kindergarten schools.

Basic education now seemed to be assured for nearly all Adivasi children in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the Centre made one further effort. A house-to-house survey was undertaken to ascertain whether there were any children of school age who for one reason or another could not go to school. It was found that some twenty-five boys and girls, although eager to learn, could not attend school because of their domestic responsibilities. The only solution for this category of children seemed to be the organization of evening classes, which in the event turned out to be one of the most successful educational enterprises undertaken by the Centre.

The classes are run on a voluntary basis by the staff of the day-schools. Initially, the programme was entirely informal: telling stories, some play-acting, music and dancing. It was later expanded, at the request of the children themselves, to include reading, writing and arithmetic. At present, the evening classes are followed by some fifty children, half of whom are girls, and the programme covers practically the full primary school syllabus. It was particularly gratifying for the staff of the centre that in 1975 four of the girls passed

the final primary school-leaving examination.

Mention should also be made of other forms of vocational education provided by the Education Centre. The Centre has its own farm where school children may work and experiment on their own, and after expenses are met, they may share in profits realized from the selling of produce. A workshop attache to the Centre not only provides training for a small number of boys, but also produces furniture and simple teaching aids for the kindergarten and primary school. The Centre also has its own printing press which is operated with the help of tribal boys and girls and so provides some vocational training. However, the main reason for buying the press was to enable the Centre to produce its own textbooks and reading materials for new literates, including a monthly newsletter.

The preceding accounts are clear examples of educational innovation in practice. By eliminating impediments to education a sound basic education was provided for children who would otherwise have been unreachable. Allowing the pupils to bring the children under their care to school took care of the problem of accessability. Taking the school to the children in the meadows demonstrated the flexibility necessary in providing the skills required for a lifetime of learning. In addition to geographic adjustment to the needs of the learners, the temporal adjustment of providing evening courses solved yet another problem of matching teacher with learner. Finally, the imaginative use of teaching aids from the immediate environment exemplifies the spirit of lifelong education in practice.

CHAPTER 3

EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS:
CASE STUDY OF ANAND NIKETAN

The present case study, like the two preceding ones, deals with efforts to improve the lot of the Adivasis, the poor and destitute aboriginal tribes of India's rural areas. It describes the work and the achievements of a voluntary agency, called Anand Niketan, which was established in 1949. The main objective of this agency was to promote the social welfare of the Adivasis.

1. Origin and Background

At the time when India became independent, in 1947, many people throughout the country were profoundly influenced by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. He was regarded as the spiritual leader whose high moral principles had been a determining factor in achieving freedom from British rule and who would now, it was hoped, lead the struggle for freedom and justice inside India itself. Large sectors of the population were extremely poor and felt they were being exploited by land owners and money lenders. The situation of the "untouchables", for example butchers and street-sweepers who because of their occupation were considered impure, and with whom all contact should, therefore, be avoided, was regarded by many as a disgrace to the Indian nation. Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence was not merely a mode of passive resistance against foreign domination, it was directed against aggression in all its forms, including exploitation of the poor and discrimination against "untouchables". Gandhi believed that this campaign against aggression could be won by encouraging values such as determination, self-reliance, the dignity of labour, ard social justice.

In the light of this doctrine, a number of Gandhi's

followers proposed a type of education designed to develop in individuals the qualities corresponding to these basic values. "Basic education" is thus closely linked to the system of values propounded by Gandhi. He thought the best way to foster qualities such as self-reliance and respect for the dignity of labour would be to select a particular craft or skill as the centre of all learning activity. The craft or skill to be selected should be the main pursuit of the community where basic education was to be provided, so as to make the learning process practically relevant. Thus, in a rural area, one would select agriculture as the core of the learning programme; in another community it might be spinning or weaving, and so forth. It should be emphasized that basic education was not primarily training in a particular trade. Gandhi himself had said, "If learning becomes merely a means of earning, it will lead to your degradation". The aim of basic education was of a different order altogether, namely to develop the spiritual and moral qualities of the individual as a member of his society.

Gandhi died in 1948, but many of his followers decided to continue his work by devoting their lives to the welfare of the under-privileged in different parts of the country. One of these was Shri Harivallabh Parikh. He selected a region in the State of Gujarat, Fenai Pradesh, as his area of operations. Fenai Pradesh covers about 100 square miles (10,000 square kilometres). Its population, spread over several hundred hamlets and villages, consists almost entirely of Adivasis who eked out a meagre subsistence by primitive farming. Here they lived in ignorance and isolation, excelling in no way except by their high rate of violent crime and excessive drinking whenever the occasion presented itself. If it is further considered that the inhabitants of Fenai Pradesh had a deep distrust of all educated people, and that a previous attempt at social reform had failed almost completely, then it will be clear that Mr. Parikh was a very courageous man indeed to choose this particular area.

Since Mr. Parikh had no Government support - in fact, he did not want any because it might have interfered with his freedom of action - he and his wife established a foundation which was to administer any voluntary contributions or donations that would hopefully be received from friends and other private citizens. They called the foundation "Anand Niketan" which means "The Abode of Joy". Mr. Parikh has been the Director of Anand Niketan since its inception in 1949. The physical assets of the foundation consist mainly of the premises where

Mr. and Mrs. Parikh live, which are the centre of their activities. In the following pages this centre will often be referred to, using the local term, as the "Ashram".

2. Activities of the Ashram

Over the years the Ashram has become associated with all aspects of the life of the Adivasis. Some of its activities, such as the fight against crime and against excessive drinking, are clearly of a social character. Others, like the establishment of cooperatives or irrigation networks, have helped to improve the economic condition of the Adivasi communities. A third group of activities, namely, running schools and training courses, falls neatly into the category "education". The distinction between "social", "economic", and "educational" activities is, however, somewhat artificial and is made here only to group the material under convenient or conventional headings. It should not be inferred that the Ashram was running three separate programmes, one social, another economic, and the third educational. The reality is that the Ashram has been trying to help the Adivasis to improve their living conditions, their way of life, the quality of life in Fenai Pradesh in every possible way. This was the only concern of the Ashram; its Director never stopped to think about labels such as "social", "economic", or, for that matter, "political", "cultural" and so forth.

a) Social Development

People's Court. When Mr. and Mrs. Parikh settled in Fenai Pradesh in 1948 there were daily conflicts and violence among the Adivasis. Most of the disputes were either about land or about women. Brothers, cousins and neighbours fought over land; husbands, wives and their families quarrelled over matters of fidelity and ill-treatment of women. Each tribe had its own methods of resolving issues of this sort, but not infrequently they ended in murder.

When the Parikhs began to be accepted in the region, people would come to them first with complaints, and later with requests to study matters under dispute and act as objective mediators. The nomination of one or more persons to act as mediator in a conflict was the traditional way of the Adivasis to settle disputes in a peaceful manner. They were, of course, aware of the existence of legal authorities such as district

magistrates and law courts, but would not consult them for a variety of reasons: they did not have the money, they feared that these authorities would not understand the tribal customs that gave rise to an offence, or they were simply too impulsive and impatient to wait for a decision.

Mr. Parikh was not at first over-anxious to act as mediator, but he realized that no-one could do any significant reconstruction work in this area without taking an interest in disputes, and so he agreed. The first case that was brought to him was that of a wife who had run away from her husband, and his verdict was apparently so well received that soon afterwards he was flooded with requests to mediate in all sorts of conflicts.

Anand Niketan's efforts at mediation have gradually become institutionalized in the form of a "People's Court" or "Open Court" as it is sometimes called, because it is held in the open in the shade of a huge tree, and all are welcome to attend its sessions. Members of the Court are selected on the basis of reputation and respectability. When a complaint is registered, a staff member of Anand Niketan collects the relevant data and studies the matter. A summons is then issued to the person against whom the complaint is made, and on a day fixed in advance a session of the People's Court is held in the presence of plaintiffs, defendents and witnesses. The Court seeks to clarify the issues in the light of evidence presented and attempts to find an equitable solution which may, for example, consist in the imposition of a fine or damages. Although Anand Niketan has no legal power to enforce the execution of the verdicts pronounced by the People's Court, its decisions are always accepted, because the people have complete faith in its integrity and ability.

The authors of the present study attended one of the Court's sessions, and it was interesting to see what kind of issues were brought before the Court and how they were dealt with. The first case was that of a sixteen-year-old girl who was involved in an affair with a married man. The girl's mother had married her off to someone else, but after a while she was sent back because she continued meeting her lover. The situation subsequently deteriorated when the girl went to live at her lover's house against the will of her mother and her maternal grandfather, who charged that the girl had been kidnapped. Indeed, the girl's relatives were quite prepared to resort to violence to save the family's honour, even though the girl her-

self was quite happy to stay with her lover and his family. The wife did not seem to mind either. She stated there was nothing wrong with her husband having two wives, that the girl was obviously very fond of her husband, and that no-one had the right to interfere in such personal and domestic matters. However, after a series of meetings and interrogations, the wife broke down and admitted that her husband had threatened her with dire consequences if she did not agree to his bigamous liaison. The verdict of the Court was as follows. First, it was explained to the man that taking a girl under 18, a minor, against the will of her guardians, was tantamount to kidnapping and rape, and that he, therefore, was guilty of a legal and moral offence. The man's wife was told that active cooperation in satisfying her husband's desire to have two wives made her an accomplice to the offence her husband had committed. Finally, the girl was persuaded to give up her illicit relationship, and husband and wife decided to continue to live together minus the girl.

The other case concerned two Adivasis who had been caught cutting wood by a Forest Department official and released after paying him the handsome sum of Rs. 400. They came to Anand Niketan because people had told them they might get their money back if the Ashram took up their case. The men apparently could not understand in the first place how a law could prevent them from cutting wood in a forest that had belonged to their family for generations. Nor did they grasp the subtle difference between a fine and a bribe. They were asked where they got the Rs. 400 from. It turned out that they had borrowed against a crop that would have fetched a higher price and that, in addition, they would have to pay a very high interest to the money lender. It was explained to them that they had no right to cut wood in a forest without authorization, and they were admonished for bribing a Government official. At the same time, a staff member of Anand Niketan was assigned the task of discussing the incident with the Government official concerned. He was confident that the money would be returend and that no action would be taken against the two Adivasis since no case had been registered against them.

These are only two cases out of the 25,000 that were settled by the People's Court during the period 1949 to 1974. Of these, more than 15,000 arose from marital disputes and over 4,000 concerned conflicts over land ownership. The remaining cases were murder and intent to murder, fighting and beating, and stealing. The total number of cases has declined significantly over the years. During the period 1953-57, the Court

handled more than 2,000 cases per year and was in session every day, but by 1974 the number had dropped to a few hundred and sessions are now held once a month or once every two months. Anand Niketan staff reported that the decline in the number of cases refers to all kinds of conflicts, with the exception of land disputes, where the number of cases is on the increase. Most of these are brought by farmers against landlords, money lenders, and Government officials, in the hope of repossessing land they or their ancestors had unwittingly mortgaged to borrow money at exorbitant interest rates.

Anti-liquor campaign. The Adivasis observe a number of holidays, some of which have a religious significance. Traditionally, the occasion of holidays has been used to organize tribal fairs or markets where all sorts of goods are offered for sale, but which also offer an opportunity for people to meet, play games and dance. However, there were usually some Adivasis who on the occasion of a tribal fair indulged in excessive drinking, which in turn led to various forms of violence such as kidnapping. The sale of alcohol is forbidden by law in the State of Gujarat, and, in fact, this State has been "dry" for the past 25 years. But some farmers continue to distil their own liquor, and it is very hard to stop them from drinking it. Alcohol seems to have a pernicious effect on the Adivasis, and it is generally considered one of the main sources of marital conflict and violence.

This is, in particular, the view of the Bhagats, people who lead a simple and God-fearing life, and who are held in high esteem by all castes, even though a Bhagat may himself belong to one of the lower castes. A Bhagat takes two vows, namely to eat only vegetarian food, and to abstain from drinking alcohol. Their example alone is said to have a considerable influence. Also, a number of Bhagats with a gift for music actively participate in anti-alcohol campaigns by singing songs on the virtues of abstinence. Groups of Bhagat singers attract many people in these rural areas where there are no cinemas or any other forms of art or amusement. They perform on all public and religious holidays, and at any other time if invited by a group of people in a village.

The management of Anand Niketan was naturally concerned about the excessive drinking habits of the Adivasis, and came to regard this as one of the main obstacles to social reconstruction. It is typical of Anand Niketan policy to base their own action on existing customs, traditions and beliefs. Thus,

rather than trying to invent something new, Anand Niketan encouraged people to become Bhagats and took an active part in the formation of groups of singers. Originally, there were only very few Bhagats, scattered over many villages. Today, more than fifty per cent of the total population of the villages visited by the authors of this study had taken the Bhagat vows.

Similarly, Anand Niketan used the tribal fairs to further its own objectives. The Ashram organizes two or three fairs per year, offering a wide range of goods for sale, as well as attractive, new games and a great deal of drum beating, music and dancing - but no liquor. On these occasions the entire staff and student body of the Institute are mobilized to make sure that people are having a good time, and are not indulging in vice. There is one other aspect in which Anand Niketan fairs are different: each fair is devoted to a specific cause such as family planning, some new agricultural development, or the special rights of Adivasis. These causes are promoted primarily through the display of illustrated materials.

Collective management of village affairs. In certain villages a majority of Adivasi families (75 per cent or more) have decided to pool their land holdings in the interest of overall economic and social progress for their community. These families have "donated" their land to a Village Assembly, at which each family is represented by one of its members. This donation does not in itself make a great deal of difference, because every family continues to cultivate its own plot of land, as before. But since the Village Assembly has now become the "owner" of the land, families pledge to pay to the Assembly one thirtieth of their total annual revenue. In addition - although this is not always practicable - the Assembly may set aside five per cent of the land for cultivation by landless peasants in the community. In any case, the Village Assembly disposes of certain assets, and these are used for the benefit of families or individuals who have no source of income. The latter may become farmers (if land can be made available) or the Village Assembly may find them an alternative occupation such as keeping goats or poultry. The occupation does not have to be related to agriculture; the main point is that it should provide a source of income. In one village, the present authors met a man who had been given a set of drums, so that he could make a living by using his musical talents on holidays and other notable occasions, such as weddings and funerals.

Most of the day-to-day business of a Village Assembly is handled by committees, each of which deals with a particular sphere of interest such as social welfare, legal affairs, economic planning, financial administration, and so on. Members of these committees are elected by the Village Assembly and serve without remuneration.

It should be noted that Village Assemblies have no official status. They are not a part of the administrative machinery, which includes State Government, district and sub-district authorities, and Village Councils. From a Government point of view, authority for the domestic affairs of a village is vested in the Village Council, not in the Village Assembly. A Village Assembly and its committees work closely together with the Village Councils in solving administrative questions, but basically they are non-governmental voluntary agencies set up to promote social and economic progress.

b) Economic Development

People's cooperatives. While the Village Assemblies and their committees were effective in stimulating a sense of solidarity and achieving social progress, a more specialized machinery was needed to imrpove the economic condition of the Adivasi farming communities. Given its philosophy of promoting self-reliance, the obvious answer seemed to Anand Niketan to be the establishment of cooperatives. This cooperative movement has been remarkably successful. There are at present 28 cooperatives, each with its own warehouse and office building, and a membership of 2,342 in 104 villages. These village cooperatives are all affiliated to a Federation established at Anand Niketan. The share capital of the Federation, which is registered as a limited liability company, amounts to Rs. 194,775.

The cooperative societies perform a wide range of functions. They are production cooperatives (storage and sale of agricultural products and the output of cottage industries) as well as consumption cooperatives (purchase and distribution of agricultural tools and equipment and household articles). They also act as credit unions, lending money to their members for the purchase of fertilizer, equipment or cattle. They are entitled to accept donations of land, which is distributed among poor peasants, or made available for public use as roads, gardens and irrigation canals. The cooperatives undertake projects

for the planting and exploitation of forests; they plan and supervise irrigation systems; they provide assistance to educational and health programmes in their areas. A detailed description of all these activities obviously falls outside the scope of the present study, but one of these, namely irrigation, deserves special attention in view of its importance for agricultural development in the region.

It is interesting to note that the initiative for new irrigation projects now rests with the community, usually the Village Assembly. This has not always been so. Mr. Parikh remembers that in the early days he suggested digging a well and the Adivasis just laughed at him. They said such luxuries were obviously intended for "white races" like his own, whose women would fetch water for drinking and bathing every morning. However, this was 25 years ago. Today, with 55,000 acres (22,000 ha) under irrigation, everyone can see the advantages in terms of vastly increased agricultural output. Irrigation means more than one crop per year and, usually, more profitable crops as well.

If a proposed project appears to be feasible, Anand Niketan tries to raise the funds required for the installation of pumps and concrete pipes from voluntary agencies in or outside India. Thus, a recent irrigation project involving the construction of a dam was in part financed by the Freedom from Hunger Campaign and AID, Australia. However, this does not imply that the farmers get water for nothing. Anand Niketan is not a charitable organization: one of its basic principles is that people should learn to rely on their own efforts. Therefore, the farmers who stand to benefit from an irrigation project must provide the labour involved, e.g. digging the canals and, in addition, contribute to the capital cost of installation. This contribution is presented to the beneficiaries as the reimbursement of an interest-free loan; in other words, they "borrow" money to have their land irrigated, and they pay the money back in four or five instalments. The entire cost of a given project is thus borne by the beneficiaries. Furthermore, the funds collected by Anand Niketan from beneficiaries are used, under the same conditions, for new irrigation projects. The original donations coming from outside Gujarat Pradesh are thus not given away, but are used to constitute what might be called a revolving fund.

The actual operation of an irrigation project involves a number of duties such as care and maintenance of the pumping

installation, the release of water at appropriate times, and collecting money from the beneficiaries. This task is usually given to a poor peasant with a large family and a small plot of land not far from the pump. He and his family are the managers of the project, and in return for their services they may use water free of charge.

c) Education and Training

The reader may have wondered how the Adivasis, who earlier in this study have been described as illiterate, ignorant, primitive farmers, had learnt to run water pumps, to participate in in meetings of Village Assembly committees and to manage a co-operative society. The answer is that some had received basic education at Anand Niketan, others had followed special courses organized by the Ashram and yet others had learnt from former students who had settled in the region as fully fledged reconstruction workers.

The Ashram runs two schools: one for basic education with a present enrolment of 68 and a staff of 5, and one providing post-basic education attended by 26 students. Mr. Parikh calls these schools "life-schools", because they aim at preparing the children for life, not in some vague or nondescript way, like "whatever children learn at school will be of use to them later in their lives", but educating them specifically for life in Fenai Pradesh.

Going to school at Anand Niketan is in no respect easier or more comfortable than working on the farm at home. Even at the Basic School children get up at 5 a.m. and go to bed at 10 p.m. They work twelve hours a day, of which two hours are manual labour in the fields. The classrooms are barely furnished and are converted into living quarters after school hours. The kitchen is run by 10 students in rotation. As regards basic simplicity and hard work, life at school is thus not vastly different from life at home, and this is deliberate.

The Basic School offers a core programme which consists of agriculture, Gandhian ideology, and one hour per day of academic learning. As to agricultural instruction, all children learn to distinguish between different kinds of seeds, how to use fertilizer and pesticides and how to irrigate, including the care and maintenance of pumping installations. They become familiar with Gandhi's ideology through lectures, meetings and

participation in rallies and protest marches against social injustice. General knowledge, including language and literature, is acquired in conjunction with agriculture, ideology, or one of the special courses organized by the Institute. The subject of these special courses varies as a function of what is going on in the region: a new course is introduced whenever there is a need for a particular skill or craft such as tailoring; spinning and weaving; cooking and bakery; the production of methane gas from sewage; or the administration of cooperative societies.

The school has no fixed syllabus. Lessons are planned on a day-to-day basis by the staff and the students, and instruction is given individually or in small groups. Upon completion of the course, at the end of Grade 7, students may sit for the State primary school leaving examination.

The programme of the Post-Basic-School at Anand Niketan is similar to that of the Basic School. The main emphasis is on agriculture, and it is significant that all graduates remain farmers even though they may take up some additional employment in the region. Students at this level follow courses given by specialists such as bakers, carpenters, and agronomists invited by the Ashram; they attend seminars, study in the library and visit field projects; and they gain practical experience by participating in the planning and execution of road construction and irrigation systems. Admission to the post-basic education course is restricted to students who have completed the Basic School, and the normal age of students is 14 to 18 years of age.

These restrictions do not apply to the *ad hoc* courses organized by Anand Niketan with financial assistance from the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, India. These courses are open to all, irrespective of age or prior education. Some of the participants are up to 50 years old and some are illiterate. The duration of each course varies from three to six months, and is normally given at a period when farmers are relatively free from work. The courses include classes for illiterates and semi-literates; courses in modern methods of agriculture; training in technical skills such as making cement pipes, carpentry, or the production of methane gas; and courses explaining Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence. In all, some 200 persons have benefited from these *ad hoc* courses.

One of the most interesting features of the Ashram's edu-

cational programme is the organization of annual seminars for field workers (most of whom are former students of Anand Niketan) and its own staff. The seminars serve a dual purpose. First, they provide an opportunity for the field workers to exchange their views on experience gained and problems encountered. Such discussions are of importance in so far as they contribute to better planning and execution of projects during the following year, and this seems indeed to be the case. In fact, a number of new projects in the region originated at one or another of these seminars. It will be noted that the practical experience of their former students is also potentially valuable to the teaching staff of the Ashram: given the flexibility of the syllabus, the staff are in a good position to use feedback from the annual seminars for their own programmes and teaching methods. The second purpose of the seminars is to provide further education and training to Anand Niketan's former students. The Ashram here follows the same practice as in its post-basic education programme. That is to say, they invite a number of outside experts, including Government officials, to give a series of lectures and to lead discussion groups on topics in their respective fields of specialization. This type of recurrent education is highly appreciated by Anand Niketan's former students, for they have all come back, without exception, to attend one or more seminars.

3. Impact on the Lives of the Adivasis

Some of the more tangible results of Anand Niketan's efforts to improve the lot of the Adivasis in the Fenai Pradesh region have already been mentioned in the preceding pages, and it will, therefore, be sufficient to recapitulate.

One of the most notable achievements has been the very significant drop in the crime rate, from an average of 2,000 cases per year in the early 1950s to less than 300 per year at the present time. This is due, in part, to the establishment of the People's Court, an impartial institution to which people can turn to settle their disputes; violence is no longer the only way to achieve justice. No doubt the decrease in the consumption of hard liquor also contributed to the decrease in violent aggression and it will be recalled that Anand Niketan ecouraged the Adivasi people to take a vow never to touch alcohol. In fifty villages, over 75 per cent of the adult population have taken such a vow, and in another 43 villages this proportion was between 50 and 75 per cent.

The successful fight against violence and excessive drinking may be seen as an achievement in the social domain. Also in this domain one could list the establishment of Village Assemblies where representatives of each family meet to discuss the common affairs of their village and, in particular, the efforts of these Assemblies to provide employment for the poor and landless inhabitants. In many cases, former students of Anand Niketan played a role in the establishment and organization of Village Assemblies.

Achievements in agricultural development were even more spectacular. The irrigation of 55,000 acres (22,000 ha) of land opened up possibilities for new crops, such as cotton, and increased the yield of existing crops. The establishment and efficient management of some 28 cooperatives not only ensured that the members obtained a fair price for their products, but also helped them to finance and buy the equipment and the household articles they needed.

In the field of education, Anand Niketan played a pioneering role. The type of education and training provided at the Basic School, the Post-Basic School, the specialized training courses and the annual seminars for its former students are directly related to the needs of the Adivasis in the Fenai Pradesh region. There are no repeaters and no drop-outs in these courses. In all these years only one student has gone to work in a nearby city; all others have stayed in the region as farmers, skilled craftsmen or social workers.

So, whether Anand Niketan's work is looked at from the point of view of social development, or in terms of economic achievement, or whether Ashram is considered as an educational agency, the conclusion is reached that this foundation and its Director have been highly successful in improving the conditions of life in its area of operations. Or, put a different way, one could say that Anand Niketan has improved the quality of life of the tribal population in Fenai Pradesh. This would probably be more accurate, because Anand Niketan was concerned with all aspects of life of the Adivasis; not merely with their material well-being or their duties and obligations as members of a community. The organization of fairs, with music and dancing and exciting new games, is a case in point. And education, it will be remembered, meant education for life. Typically, Anand Niketan called its schools "life-schools".

Yet the statement that Anand Niketan has improved the

quality of life of the Adivasis does not give full credit to the foundation. Perhaps its most remarkable achievement has been that the Ashram showed the Adivasis how they could improve their own condition. In fact, all the improvements mentioned in this study have been planned and carried out by the Adivasis themselves. It is they - not the Director of Anand Niketan - who take the initiative for new irrigation projects; they run the cooperative societies; they establish Village Assemblies of family representatives. This achievement, whereby people learn to rely on their own inner strength in the struggle for a better life, was the most gratifying for Anand Niketan because it demonstrated the validity of Gandhi's teachings.

It is also the most interesting achievement from an educational point of view. Specifically, the educator's interest is in *how* the Adivasis learned to be better farmers, to be more cooperative, and so forth, in short: how they "learned to be". This question will be further discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION OF THE CASE STUDIES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF LIFELONG EDUCATION

The case studies described in the preceding chapters were commissioned by the Unesco Institute for Education in the framework of its programme relating to lifelong education. The underlying assumptions were, first, that the study of concrete educational situations would show whether, and to what extent, the various principles of lifelong education are a practical proposition, and, second, that the concept of lifelong education might be clarified in the light of case studies of this sort.

1. The Concept of Lifelong Education

Lifelong education has been the subject of discussion at a large number of meetings, notably meetings organized by UNESCO, and has given rise to a fairly considerable literature. Since lifelong education refers to something that is moving and changing, different authors have expressed different views on what it really means, and what its implications are in a given educational context. Inevitably, the original idea has been distorted from time to time, and some of its pioneering advocates have made exaggerated claims as to the benefits that might be derived from its universal application.

The following description is based on Paul Lengrand's *Introduction to Lifelong Education* (1). According to him lifelong education may have three complementary meanings. Firstly, it may be interpreted as an educational service provided for adults. In a number of countries provision has been made for adults who in their youth did not have the opportunity of going to school (e.g. literacy training) or who for some reason wanted to continue their education after a period of schooling or

training (e.g. vocational retraining, citizenship education, cultural growth). This type of education may take place at any point in an adult's life-time.

Secondly, lifelong education may be interpreted as referring to the individual's process of development. In this sense education is *per se* a lifelong process. Lengrand says that this is so not only because the rapid advance of science and technology makes it necessary to up-date one's knowledge at frequent intervals, but above all, because all aspects of the human personality are in continuous process of development. In fact, he sees the development of the human being as identical with education, and since this development is a lifelong process, education is permanent, continuous, lifelong.

The third meaning, a corollary of the preceding one, assimilates education to the factors of education. If the aim of education is development of the human being, and this development is lifelong, education obviously includes all factors, influences, services, operating during the life of a human being such as family (informal education), school (formal education), adult education (non-formal education). All these influences are to be conceived as building up a total system of education, in which each phase, service, influence has a value of its own as well as within the total system. The child should learn at school for instance how to use experience for his own lifelong growth and development or "know-how", so that he can be himself, make his own choices, have his own identity.

The concept of lifelong education as defined by Lengrand is based on two kinds of consideration, one practical and the other theoretical. The practical consideration explains why, and under what conditions, it is desirable to provide education beyond the school age; namely that some adults missed the opportunity of learning when they were young, and that the rapid advance of science and technology makes certain types of knowledge and skills learnt in the formal school system obsolete. Considerations of this sort would seem convincing enough to provide adult education or recurrent vocational training, but on a limited scale: limited to a particular sub-group of the total population and limited also in time, namely the duration of a course.

The other type of consideration reflects a particular philosophy, a way of looking at life, that determines the kind of education to be provided. This philosophy is humanist, perhaps

with existentialist overtones, in the sense that it proclaims the full development of the individual human being as the purpose of his life. The individual himself is seen as mainly responsible for his own development, which is a lifelong process, but he needs educational opportunities (interaction with people, transaction with the physical world) to accomplish this purpose. The desirability of lifelong education, as opposed to recurrent education, is thus derived from a value system - not from practical considerations.

2. Lifelong Education in the Three Cases Studied

Turning now to the relation between lifelong education on the one hand, and the educational programmes of the three institutions reported above on the other, the first approach that comes to mind is to regard these experiences as embodiment of the principles of lifelong education. However, this approach would be a bit artificial. The three programmes under review were established and developed, not as an application of lifelong education, but as dictated by a specific philosophy of life called "Sarvodaya". It would thus be legitimate to ask whether, or to what extent, these educational programmes are consistent with the principles of Sarvodaya, but it would not be correct to ask the same question with respect to lifelong education. The correct question to ask vis-à-vis lifelong education is to what extent these educational practices coincide with some of the principles of lifelong education, and if it is so what do they contribute to clarifying the meaning of these principles and to putting them into practice.

The following discussion attempts to make connections between the theoretical framework of lifelong education and the three educational practices studied. For the sake of convenience it is proposed to discuss school education and adult education separately.

a) School Education

Education, as it is provided today in most schools in most countries, suffers from a lack of adaptation to what goes on in the world outside the school. What children and adolescents learn at school is not, or at least not sufficiently, relevant to their future lives. The schools seem to operate in a vacuum. In particular, "the future adult is not prepared by

education to cope with his real situation, which is essentially that he is destined to become a worker" (2). There should be a much closer link between school and "life" - not life as it was a century ago or as it is in some distant geographical area, but life as it is today in the area where the school operates. The curriculum should not be fixed for any length of time, but should be constantly adapted to changing conditions in the region.

Similarly, the methods of education and the teaching materials used in the formal school system are too standardized and too uniform. Lectures and books are the main ingredients of the traditional method. These may be appropriate means for the transmission of a certain type of knowledge, but they are unsuitable for many other forms of knowledge. Furthermore, books are not the only source of knowledge. Numerous educational materials and teaching aids are available everywhere.

> "If the professional educator is imbued with the principles of an education which draws upon all the sources of life and all the forms of experience, if he can see clearly what he is aiming at and knows how knowledge is acquired and how the personality develops, he will be capable, in order to achieve his aim, of taking advantage of all the opportunities and all the material and technical resources available to him. If necessary, he will invent new ones and find new uses for old." (3)

It will be obvious that these views, insofar as they accurately reflect the implication of lifelong education principles for school learning, show a remarkable correspondence to what was reported in the case studies.

The curriculum is adapted to conditions in the region, with special reference to the work situation. Agriculture is the main if not the only occupation in the area and all children, including those in the primary schools, work in the field for two hours a day. Anand Niketan's Basic School is a particularly good example of curriculum adaptation; they have no fixed curriculum at all and plan their educational activities on a day-by-day basis. (They can afford to be different because they have no government subvention and can, therefore, be as flexible as they like.) Another most interesting feature of Anand Niketan is to bring local experts like bakers and motor mechanics to the school to talk to students about their work,

and this provides yet another link between the school and what goes on in the region. Anand Niketan certainly does not operate in a vacuum

The methods of education and the materials used are likewise in conformity with the educational practices derived from the concept of lifelong education. Most of the learning that takes place at Anand Niketan, is in conjunction with some practical problems on which participants are working. Lectures by outside experts and lessons by teachers are always followed by a discussion. Students learn about law and civil right by participating in protest marches and attending sessions of the People 's Court. Nor is it only Anand Niketan that provides the examples that fit the methods proposed by life-long education. Mrs. Tarabai's "Meadow School" for children who were in charge of grazing cattle illustrates how imaginative and devoted teachers can provide education in a school without walls, and for that matter without any man-made materials.

Thus, as far as school education is concerned, there appears to be a broad area of agreement between the practices described in the case studies and those that would be developed in pursuance of the principles of lifelong education. This agreement indicates the feasibility and preconditions for, and outcomes of, implementing such lifelong education principles as the need for alternatives to school education, of close links between school education and community improvement, of articulation between the learning which has taken place in the school and outside school.

b) Adult Education

From the viewpoint of lifelong education, the principles guiding the content and methods in adult education in the three cases are basically the same as those advocated for school education. The main criteria for the selection of courses for adults are the needs, the interest and the specific abilities of the individual. They might be related to his work, his role in a trade union or a political party, his interest in music or other forms of art, or whatever. This relationship is of primary importance because it provides the necessary motivation for the adult to start a course and to persevere. Many literacy campaigns for adults have ended in failure because the courses were not perceived by participants as directly related to their work or other needs.

The methods used in adult education are based on active participation of the students. Discussion is seen as more effective than lectures, students try to solve problems themselves rather than sit and watch how the teacher does it, and so forth.

Here, the cases analysed provide evidence of the feasibility of and preconditions for educational services for adults organized according to the principles of lifelong education, i.e. flexibility, adaptability, active participation. At the Kosbad Hill Agricultural Institute, for instance, courses are organized ranging from a few days to several months whenever a need is felt for such a course. Hence the enormous variety of courses: agriculture, horticulture, nutrition, health, membership in village councils; courses for farmers, their wives, adolescents. A bureaucratic school administration might see the programme of the Institute as incoherent or even messy, but in fact, courses were organized to meet the needs of the people, and not vice versa.

Again, the People's Court was not started by Anand Niketan because its Director wanted to establish a course in civil law. On the contrary, he was at first reluctant to be involved in the Adivasis' quarrel about land and women, but at their insistence he agreed first to act as mediator in some disputes and then gradually turned the People's Court into an educational institution.

Similar principles were demonstrated in adult education in Kosbad Hill and Fenai Pradesh. They too correspond in many respects with those advocated in the theory of lifelong education.

In sum, the activities described in the case studies show that the principles of lifelong education are not utopian or restricted to developed countries; they are a practical proposition for developing countries as well. The Indian experiences have contributed toward clarifying the principles of lifelong education by providing numerous examples of successful innovations in education. Even in areas where the means are as limited as the educational need is great, lifelong education can provide guidelines for solution to pressing human problems.

NOTES

1. Lengrand, Paul: *Introduction to Lifelong Education*. London: Croom Helm; Paris: The Unesco Press, 1975.

2. Lengrand, Paul: op. cit., p.124.

3. Lengrand, Paul: op. cit., p.121.